

House—I guess the White House Counsel, but who the heck knows; it is hard to tell who is in charge over there—is blocking this.

So, again, give my office a call at (202) 224-1026. I am ready to meet and talk to you anytime before the vote. Don't worry—I don't think President Biden is going to yank your nomination if you call me. Heck, he probably doesn't even know this is going on. But you know this is the right thing to do, Judges. You have read the Constitution. Heck, if our meeting goes well, I might even vote for you.

But here is the thing: You will learn more about the issues that you are going to have to deal with very soon in your tenure that you probably don't know anything about—no offense to you. I have read your backgrounds. You don't know anything about Native Alaskan law. You don't know anything about ANILCA. You probably have very different views than I and my constituents do on the Second Amendment. But you need to hear these issues because you are going to be life-tenured on the Ninth Circuit, and you don't have time to talk to me, a U.S. Senator, who is a Senator representing a State from the Ninth Circuit? You know it is wrong.

By the way, my colleagues in the Senate know it is wrong. So I hope my Democratic and Republican colleagues realize that this is not a good precedent. This is not a good precedent. It has never happened as long as I have been here.

You know, from big things to small things, this administration has really focused in many ways on smashing political and institutional norms that have enjoyed strong bipartisan support. It is not good for this body, and it is not good for the government.

The Wall Street Journal, today, had an article about Biden's Federal regulators staging a coup against the Director of the FDIC on bank mergers. One of these regulators doesn't even have the power over bank mergers, and now he is trying to be in charge.

I serve on the U.S. Naval Academy's Board of Visitors. It is a huge honor. The President comes in, President Biden, and fires everybody on the service academies who was appointed by President Trump. Nobody has ever done that before—no President. Everybody on the Board of Visitors of the Naval Academy is furious—the Democrats, the Republicans. The No. 1 thing they are saying is, this President is the first one to politicize the service academies. Then, oh, by the way, he hasn't appointed anyone yet to replace the people he fired, so we didn't have a quorum for our meeting last week.

He is just smashing institutional norms. Yet this institutional norm of advice and consent, when it comes to circuit court judges with life tenure, is something that we have all agreed upon. The previous administration certainly allowed for it. Yet, right now, I can't meet with Ninth Circuit judges

who are going to have enormous power for their entire lives over my constituents.

So, to my colleagues, we shouldn't allow this. You guys know it is wrong.

To the judges—like I said, Judge Sanchez, Judge Koh, Judge Sung, Judge Thomas—give my office a call. Do the right thing. Your first test of judicial independence is before you of the Senate. The U.S. Senate—of the Senate, of which I am a part—wants to do our constitutional role. Give us a call so we can do it. Ignore the very bad advice you are getting from the White House Counsel or whoever is in charge over there.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN EDWARD PRITCHARD

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, the time has come to once again bid farewell to another one of Team Blackburn's esteemed fellows.

Over the past year, we have had the privilege of working with Capt. Edward Pritchard, who came to us from the U.S. Marine Corps to serve as our first Department of Defense fellow.

It was a strange year to be a fellow here in the Senate, but Ed rose to the occasion and impressed us. He impressed every one of us with his work ethic, humor, and his singular commitment to maintaining the strength and integrity of the U.S. military. It has truly been an honor having Ed on our team, and I think I speak for each and every one of us when I say we will miss him.

Captain Pritchard, I thank you for your service to Tennessee and to this great Nation and wish you all the best as you head across the river to the Pentagon to start the next exciting chapter in your already distinguished career.

INFLATION

Madam President, last Friday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released a grim set of numbers that confirmed our worst fears: Inflation is getting worse, and by this month, the American people are in for even more economic pain. Why? Because their paychecks just can't keep up with the skyrocketing prices. On top of everything else, they get to look forward to a pay cut every month for the foreseeable future, and all this is happening just in time for Christmas. It is insult added to injury.

Now, it would be bad enough if this economic nosedive would have happened no matter what the White House had chosen to do, but it would not have happened. It was totally preventable. No, this is the direct result of the Democrats' reckless taxing-and-spending spree that started in March and has lasted all year long.

American families struggled to stretch their budgets through 6.8 percent inflation in November—that was in November—which is the highest we have seen in almost 40 years. We are looking at the largest 12-month increase since 1982.

Think about this: All of this happened just as the experts predicted and just as Tennesseans kept saying they feared this was what would happen.

Now, despite a mountain of evidence proving their recovery strategy has failed, Democrats are ready to lean into the past year's insanity and pump not millions, not billions, but trillions—trillions—of dollars into the economy that they have already destroyed. What is worse is they are trying to leverage this economic pain against their Republican colleagues by refusing to raise the debt ceiling to accommodate their own reckless spending.

You can't make this stuff up. This is Biden economics, it is intentional, and it is painful because what the Democrats are doing is showing they are willing to spend taxpayer money on things that taxpayers don't want, which is this destructive economic agenda.

So I ask my Democratic colleagues: What is it about these numbers that are staring you in the face that you do not understand? Are you so eager to force President Biden's "Build Back Broke" agenda on the American people that you are willing to throw reason and accountability and basic economics out the window? Is it really worth watching your fellow countrymen suffer? Is it worth watching people whom you represent, people who elected you, suffer?

If you all bothered to pay attention, what you would see is just how bad it has gotten out here in the real world. The policies that you are so convinced will lead us into a socialist utopia, as some on the left like to say, have dragged the people into a constant—constant—state of fear and worry.

One Tennessee mom told me last week:

Marsha, this stuff scares me. It just scares me.

RUSSIA

Now, Madam President, this not only makes for an extremely discontented group of people, it makes us vulnerable as a nation. The new "axis of evil," as I like to call them, is watching. Communist China, Iran, and North Korea are all watching the chaos here in Washington play out with great interest, and, if the past few weeks have taught us anything, so is their counterpart in the "axis of evil"—Russia.

On Sunday, we saw a flood of so-called strong signals coming from the G7 following a meeting to discuss Russia's aggression toward Ukraine. Now, I don't discount the importance of these statements—I do hope Vladimir Putin heard us loud and clear—but I also know that statements mean nothing unless they come from a position of strength and unless they are accompanied by action, and right now, that is not what the Biden administration is projecting or doing.

President Biden's refusal to lead by example is putting us in danger, and it is putting our partners in Kiev in danger. His administration has spent the